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# DAY OF FASTING AND PRAYER ~ 24-NOV-21

## INTRODUCTION TO “DAY OF FASTING AND PRAYER”

*If you are new to fasting and prayer, the following introductory material may be of help. However, if you have been doing this with us for the past few months, and are comfortable with fasting, feel free to jump to the next page.*

**Welcome** to “the cowboy church’s” day of fasting and prayer. I trust that as you engage with the LORD in this way that you will grow deeper in your relationship with Him.

Often, we approach fasting as a way of showing God how serious we are about the things we are asking from Him. We think that because we are giving up food, time, etc. that He will pay closer attention to us and our requests. Not True. Fasting is not a means of manipulating God to give us what we ask for. Really, it isn’t even about asking for things in prayer. It is about sitting with God, in His divine presence, and allowing Him to lead and guide our time. It is a time for praise and worship, for scripture meditation and for prayer according to His desires and His will. Through the time of fasting, our prayer focus should be one of aligning ourselves with the will of God and deepening our relationship with Him. In this way, He can lead us into His thoughts, attitudes, and possible action plans in our daily and community (church) life.

Here are a couple of articles that may give added information along with some practical tips for fasting. I may not agree with everything on these sites but there is a wealth of practical information that can be helpful when you add fasting to your life regularly.

<https://www.cru.org/us/en/train-and-grow/spiritual-growth/fasting/personal-guide-to-fasting.html>

<https://www.cru.org/us/en/train-and-grow/spiritual-growth/fasting/7-steps-to-fasting.2.html>

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## **SCRIPTURE MEDITATION**

Christmas season is virtually upon us. “Black Friday” sales surround us as stores compete for our money. More and more, Jesus is getting pushed out of our celebrations and remembrances of Christmas. I don’t want us to focus on the negative or on what we think “should be”. Rather, I would like to encourage us to simply change our own personal focus this season in gentleness and humility of mind and heart. Trees, lights, tinsel, presents, etc. are not necessarily wrong, but they can be distractions instead of enhancements. As we contemplate the coming season of celebration, I want to invite you to a renewed focus on Jesus and our responses to Him.

**Revelation** is a seemingly strange place to start. However, we often associate this season with meals together and parties with family and friends. In Revelation 3 we are invited by Jesus to the greatest dinner party possible. After starting there, we will also look at the preparations for Jesus’ birth and the responses they received.

### **Revelation 3:14-22**

- As we think of celebrations this holiday season, keep in mind that nothing but your own choice can keep you from celebrating with Jesus Christ. He is ready and willing to spend time with you as you allow Him His rightful place.

### **Luke 1:5-23, 59-66 – Zachariah**

- We see the announcement to Zachariah and the miraculous birth of his son, John. Zachariah’s initial response was doubt bordering on hostility (this seems evident from Gabriel’s response in vv19-20). Zachariah paid the price for his response but was eventually restored.
- Doubt isn’t necessarily wrong, but it can lead to bitterness, hostility towards God, and disobedience if it is left to grow and fester. Am I harbouring this kind of doubt and hostility towards God, His abilities, and His Word? Are there actions I need to take to rectify this?

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### **Luke 1:26-38 – Mary**

- Mary also questioned the messenger but with a totally different heart attitude. We see a willingness to have God do whatever is His will in her life.
- How have I been open to God’s interventions or interruptions in my life over the past several months? Are there things going on that I need to be more accepting of, or expressing gratitude for?

### **Matthew 1:18-25 – Joseph**

- What a difficult place this put Joseph in. His reputation would be severely tarnished. His dreams surrounding his marriage would be dramatically changed. And yet, we see his willingness to obey the Lord, even in these difficult circumstances.
- How have I seen difficult situations in my life lead to obedience of the Lord? Are there circumstances or situations that I need to re-examine to see whether I am living in obedience or rebellion?
- Close with a return to Revelation 3:20. Let this season be filled with a continuous “dinner party” with the Lord.

### **PRAYER CONCERNS**

Here are some prayer concerns that you can be praying for...

#### **International**

- God’s glory to be revealed in our world particularly this season
- God’s will done on earth as it is in Heaven...

#### **National**

- Salvation for our national leaders
- All those affected by the B.C. floods and other issues across the country

- National Church
  - Our B.C. churches in the affected areas seeking to minister to those around them
  - That God's glory would be first and foremost the churches this season

### **Provincial**

- Salvation for our provincial leaders
- Ongoing Covid-19 concerns
- Regional Church
  - Churches across the province that are struggling with finances and personnel shortages (i.e., pastors, church leaders, etc.)

### **Local**

- That God would be very visible in our church and our lives as we live in this difficult time
- That Jesus would be our focus during this upcoming season and not the many distractions commercial, political, etc.
- Pray for concerns in our congregation, financial, health, mental health, relationships

### **Personal**

- Whatever requests the Lord has laid upon your heart.

### **Closing Praise**

- Remember, God is ready and willing to celebrate with you daily (Revelation 3:20).

May the LORD bless you this day as you focus on Him. May He find you ready and willing to invite Him in – to be included in every part of your daily life. And may this be a season of ongoing celebrations with Him!

*Pastor Orban*

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